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THE TRAINING SCHOOL BULLETIN

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THE TRAINING SCHOOL BULLETIN

Published each month (except July and August) by The Training School at Vineland, New Jersey.

Single Copies 15c Yearly subscription (10 Nos.) $1.00

Entered March 14, 1904 at the Post Office, Vineland, N. J., as second-class matter under Act of Congress of July 16, 1894.

The *Training School Bulletin* is published by The Training School at Vineland, New Jersey. It is open to original articles dealing with all aspects of mental retardation. The Editors will consider for publication the following types of material:

1. Articles of a technical nature, e. g., reports of research, discussion of problems in the field.
2. Non-technical articles of general interest, e. g., human interest stories of the mentally retarded, restatements of technical material for the layman.
3. Book reviews and news notes.
4. In special instances republication of important articles having limited distribution.

Authors receive 25 copies of the Bulletin free and may order additional reprints. The author may have to share part of the publication cost of excessive illustrative or tabular material.

Address all manuscripts to: Editor, Training School Bulletin, The Training School, Vineland, N. J. This *Journal* adheres to the conventions concerning bibliographies, citations, preparation of tables and cuts, etc. as described by *J. E. Anderson and W. L. Valentine.* The preparation of articles for publication in the journals of the American Psychological Association, *Psychol. Bull.*, 1944, 41, 345-376.

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SOME CHANGES IN TRAINING AND AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AT THE TRAINING SCHOOL

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Some one has said, "Nothing is so constant as change". In every field of endeavor at The Training School this has most definitely been true. Always there has been a striving to improve, to supercede old ways of doing things with better ways. The agricultural department from its very inception has always played an important role in experimentation and in seeking to improve and revise its methods for a more efficient operation. In this connection, we thought that it might prove beneficial to evaluate practices of the past in the light of their present worth and observe which have been discarded, which retained.

Since much of the farming operation in an institution is done with pupil help, it becomes apparent that happiness and contentment must be maintained while the work is being done or the task rapidly becomes drudgery. For this reason, it has been necessary to revise methods of training so that the work is interesting and pleasant.

In the annual report of the Department of Agriculture, published in The Training School Bulletin in April, 1945, reference was made to a method used in teaching the pupils correct spacing in setting onions in the field. At that time, they used a small stick, moving it from plant to plant, measuring the proper distance to place the onion sets. Our report cited the fact that a boy grew tired of this monotonous technique and when the supervisor was not looking would discard the stick even though he had not learned to judge the distances properly. Today a machine is used to make small identations in the soil at the required spacing and the pupil places an onion in the spot indicated. After using the latter method it is noted that many

of the pupils rapidly conceive the correct spacing and with practice do the task properly although the marks often become obscured by loose soil. They now enjoy a chore they formerly despised and the experienced student is eager to teach his inexperienced classmate.

Large numbers of fowl are dressed in the poultry plant at The Training School and our pupils help in this work. A somewhat different procedure has been introduced which has speeded up the removal of feathers from the fowl. Formerly the birds were placed on a table after scalding and here the boys picked them, making a long and irksome job of it. Feathers already plucked off stuck to the bird and plastered themselves over the picker's hand until he became annoyed and discouraged. Today the birds are hung by the legs in spread position from two hooks suspended from the ceiling and with one sweep of the hands most of the feathers are removed and there is not the constant brushing away of old feathers to bother the operator. Using this method, one of the average students has completed the dressing work in as little as ten seconds when it took many minutes before. We now dress the amount of chicken required for the one week in one day, when previously it used the better part of three days.

The above examples serve to show that a little thought and a few simple devices sometimes produce a much more economical procedure and an equally favorable method of keeping the student-worker contented.

There is always a need for experimentation in the growing of crops, for in this pursuit one never knows all the answers. In 1942, a number of projects or experiments were carried on and it is interesting to note in reviewing these, which have proved beneficial and those which might be classified as of no consequence.

Included in the list of projects that year was a lime and fertilizer test under asparagus, where the materials were placed directly beneath the roots of the new plants when the field was set out. At that time this procedure was hailed by many observers as the most effective and splendid results were predicted. This field showed excellent growth the first year, but after eight years it has failed to make outstanding yields. We conclude that because the roots did not need to spread throughout the soil for nutrition but found it directly beneath them, their capacity to hold water and derive nutri-

tion from the land was greatly lessened and, as a result, in later years when droughts struck, the spears of asparagus were smaller and total production greatly reduced. The lime and fertilizer might better have been broadcast through the soil and a much stronger rooting system encouraged.

Our country's chemical laboratories have come a long way since the days when the late Professor Maurice A. Blake and his colleagues did peach breeding and spraying work here in the early 1900's. Fungicidal sprays were developed a number of years ago and "Bordeaux Mixture", a copper spray, was used extensively throughout the United States and is still being used in competition with other prepared fungicides. It holds a top position, being rated one of the best blight disease eradicators ever produced. It was used in an experiment on celery here at The Training School, in 1942, in comparison with another copper spray and is still being used today with gratifying results. The fruit grower of a decade ago would not recognize a present day apple or peach spraying schedule as so many of the old fungicides and insecticides have been replaced by new. Milder concentrations of sulfur are being applied instead of the old concentrated lime sulfur, or boiled lime and sulfur, used from the very beginning in controlling "San Jose" scale in peaches. Also, iron compound sprays are used to control certain blotches on apples and DDT and Parathion are replacing lead arsenate for insect control. These materials are not a cure by any means and as in the case of flies becoming immune to DDT so do minute insects known as red mite increase where this is applied on apples. Some varieties of fruits do not tolerate the new organic compounds and we are told that McIntosh apples are injured by the use of Parathion. It therefore becomes necessary to revert to the old remedies at times and in certain circumstances. Because of its dangerous potentialities, Parathion has not been used at The Training School in fruit insect control.

Commercial fertilizer containing seven per cent potassium was tested against that with ten per cent potassium in growing white potatoes in 1942. The land where the ten per cent potassium was applied yielded 24 bushels per acre more than that which received the seven per cent. When white potatoes were grown with fertilizers

containing only seven per cent potassium, yields of 400 bushels per acre were unusual, but most potatoes are grown today with larger amounts of potassium and yields of 600 bushels per acre are not uncommon. In some areas of the United States 800 to 900 bushel yields have been confirmed.

With the changes in fertilization have come the development of higher producing varieties and the two combined have given really tremendous crops. The test at The Training School was run on the old variety known as "Cobbler", but such names as "Katahdin", "Sebego", "Sequoia", "Mohawk" and others are producing outstanding yields today.

Hybrid corn was being strongly advertised throughout our country in 1940, and the New Jersey Experiment Station had developed two strains of merit known as "New Jersey No. 2" and "New Jersey No. 4". The report in The Training School Bulletin in 1942 states that a yield of 80.6 bushels per acre was produced using "New Jersey No. 2". Hybrids today consistently outyield open pollinated varieties and growers are switching entirely to hybrids. In the years preceding 1940 both field corn and sweet corn grown here were of the open pollinated kinds, but today all corn is grown from hybrid seed. Though new seed must be procured each year as hybrids drop in production if new seed is not used, the increase in yield and hardiness of the plants to withstand storms and drought more than pays for the increased cost.

Portions of The Training School farm were set aside for projects in "land-resting" in cooperation with the New Jersey Experiment Station in 1942 and have been continued since. Reports have been published in The Bulletin emphasizing the good resulting from this work.

The story is told that a farmer was one day talking to a soil chemist discussing the building up of soil fertility. The farmer said that he could not understand why the pasture lot where he kept his cow did not grow as good grass as it did the year before. Said he, "I fed the cow all her feed in that lot and left all the manure there to fertilize the ground". Then the chemist asked calmly, "When you slaughtered the animal this winter, did you put it back on the land too?", to which the farmer of course replied that he and his family had eaten the meat instead.

Farmers for many years have had the mistaken idea that land was being rested if it was growing grass or hay which was harvested and hauled away to the barn or consumed in the field by the animals. They thought that because the land was not being plowed each year and a heavy sod was being formed on the land by a hardy root growth, that this was building up soil fertility. It is true that old pasture fields of 25-50 year growths have produced excellent crops after being broken by the plow, but that same result can be obtained in a very short period of time with land-resting.

True land-resting is a process whereby all tops, stems, roots, etc. of plants grown on a particular area are turned back into the soil for a year or more. When the hay was harvested or grazed by the animals and the manure returned to the land, the same result would not be obtained since the animal took certain elements out in making body tissue, hair and bone, and the manure did not contain these elements, thus the soil gradually became depleted of them.

Between 1942 and 1945, soil experts at New Brunswick emphasized that some areas in New Jersey were becoming deficient in the minor element known as *boron*. Today other trace elements are becoming scarce and fertilizers with certain minor elements are being manufactured. The soil contains these elements in small proportions and in very delicate balance and this can be easily upset, but great difficulty is incurred in the endeavor to correct the deficiency once it has been ascertained. Several years ago in Australia, farmers were finding it difficult to grow good wheat on land that had once produced bumper crops. Chemical analysis showed that the soil was deficient in the element known as *molybdenum* and after computation it was decided the land needed only an ounce to the acre. The problem then was how to apply an ounce to the acre until some one suggested that it be mixed with the seed, which was done and the land went on producing abundant crops again.

Less than a decade ago, most soils were tested simply to ascertain their acidity or alkalinity, but today, many farmers are having a complete chemical analysis made. Fertilizer and lime are then applied according to the needs of the crop to be grown and its relationship with what is found to be already in the soil.

A glance into the poultry industry shows some revolutionary changes in management and great strides toward the control of certain diseases. "Coccidiosis", a virus disease that attacks birds in early growth is now largely controlled by adding one of the sulpha drugs to the water or feed. This disease can cause tremendous losses in a poultry flock. "Newcastle" disease, a comparatively new disease in America, but prevalent throughout the world, made its appearance in this country only within the last three or four years. It is now being satisfactorily controlled through vaccination.

Numerous changes in management have taken place in recent years and today many poultrymen are switching from the shed-type laying house to one with a gable roof construction. Some are advocating the elimination of roosts and dropping boards, a procedure we have adopted with success at The Training School.

From time immemorial the average flock of chickens on the farm lived with the cattle, the horses and the hogs, scratched in the refuse of the barnyard and ate the grass that grew around the barn. These birds were extremely healthy, perhaps because the food they picked up around the other animals contained the certain elements so conducive to good health. The hens laid eggs with deep golden yolks, when they did lay, which was largely only in the spring and they mostly found their own roosting and nesting places. They were not huddled together in great masses in a laying house and kept there practically all their lives. Neither did they produce 200 eggs a year as many do today! When hens were first grouped in laying houses on The Training School's large poultry farms, each house was cleaned often and new litter placed on the floor. Now a procedure known as "built-up litter" is being followed by successful poultrymen everywhere. This system is one in which any strawy substance or shredded sugar cane stems are spread on the laying house floor at the time the young pullets are put in the house, and gradually more and more litter is added until considerable depth is attained. This is turned and shaken up from time to time so that a large amount of droppings and litter cover the floor. Such a covering absorbs moisture from the outside and also that caused by the heat of the birds' bodies. When the litter was removed often and replaced with new, the material would move about on the floor and bare spaces show where the birds continually walked or alighted from their nests.

This was not beneficial to the health of the flock since it resulted in bruised feet and damaged legs. In the deep litter, micro-organism activity is stimulated, and this breaks down the strawy substance and manure, thereby insuring as a whole better bird health.

In reviewing these changes, most of which have come gradually and are in some instances a complete reversal of what we believed best in the past, we have observed the results and realize that when changes are advocated, we must be ever on the alert to determine whether they are wise or not. Some must be tried to prove or disprove their worth, and yet to neglect them might be to pass by an opportunity of great value. The poet truly has said, "The old order changeth, yielding place to new," but only time and practice can define the true worth and merit of a procedure, be it old or new.

READING CLINIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Temple University Eighth Annual Reading Institute was held in Philadelphia recently and it was announced that "Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties" will be the theme for the next Institute program. The dates announced for the program are January 28 to February 1, 1952. For information write to Dr. Emmett A. Betts, The Reading Clinic, Temple University, Philadelphia 22, Pennsylvania.

Among Visitors to The Training School During March . . .

DR. KOKICHI HIGUCHI: Japanese psychiatrist touring the United States. Dr. Higuchi, who is Chief Psychiatrist of the Tokyo Medical Reformatory, is making a tour of the United States to study American institutional methods. He was a guest at The Training School March 22 and 23.

MRS. SARAH SMILANSKY: Educator from Tel Avis, Israel. Mrs. Smilansky, who was brought to the United States under the auspices of the National Council of Jewish Women, is studying mental deficiency and clinical procedures for emotionally disturbed children. She will be charged with the responsibility of developing such programs in Israel after her return.

MRS. ELIZABETH BOWIE: Speech Therapist from Toronto, Canada. Mrs. Bowie, who came to Toronto 18 months ago from Scotland where she worked for four years with Dr. Anne McAllister at the Glasgow College of Speech Therapy, is Speech Pathologist for the cerebral palsy program for the Children's Hospital in Toronto and the Woodeden Residential School for the Cerebral Palsied in London, Ontario. Mrs. Bowie was at The Training School March 5 and 6 to observe diagnosis and therapy of children with aphasia.

A VISIT WITH RAYMOND

The silvered water tower and a host of buildings came into view as we rounded the last bend in Palermo Road before entering the model farm. The first building on the right, a brown stone chapel, stood out even though the morning was dull. To the right of the road a red and black sign framed in grey read "Menantico Colony of The Training School."

"Raymond painted the sign," somebody in the car said. "He's done a lot of handiwork like that around the colony. He does most of his work in what he calls his Hobbyshop . . . that's where we should find him this morning."

Our grey Ford rumbled down the macadam road between a row of evergreens towards the cottage and living section of Menantico Colony, home of some one hundred older boys of The Training School who carry on the duties necessary to maintain the farm. The farm, which was created in 1913, is under the management of Frank G. Merithew and has established a reputation for growing premium sweet potatoes. One other noteworthy accomplishment of the colony has been in the field of dairy farming. Through many years of effort the colony has built up one of the leading pure-blooded Holstein herds in the nation.

As we passed the Merithew home we could see a trace of a large artificial lake. We stopped in front of a small cement block building with a red-shingled roof and with a sign above the door. The sign read "Hobbyshop". We walked towards the building on a circular path through a well-cared for lawn on which there were several flower pots painted a bright red. Off to the left of the Hobbyshop we could see a small winterized garden, obviously someone's summer-time hobby. A clean white flag pole stood in the center of the lawn.

We found the door was locked so we turned to ask someone where we could find Raymond. However, another boy came towards us and asked if we would like to go into the shop and look around. He said that Raymond was doing some work at Hankins, one of the cottages at the farm, as he unlocked the door and we went in. The shop was sharply divided into two sections, one for working and

painting and the other a sort of reading room and office. Pictures and photographs that Raymond had framed hung on the walls. Other decorations indicated a lot of work had been put into making the shop pleasant.

We realized that only seeing Raymond's Hobbyshop and some examples of his work did not give us a complete picture so we started across the street to Hankins Cottage. A cold rain had started so we didn't take time to plan an interview as we hurried into the cottage. We found Raymond, and while his answers at first were stiff, we soon found that an interesting story was unfolding—the story of a boy who came to The Training School at the age of 10 and who has found an ideal adjustment today at the age of 57.

We asked Raymond if he remembered the first day he came to the colony.

"Sure I remember just like it was yesterday," he was quick to answer. "It was a Wednesday afternoon and Professor Johnstone brought me up. He said that I didn't have to stay if I didn't like it here . . . and I have to admit that at first I wasn't sure that I would like it. At that time there were only 30 boys at the colony and we stayed in 'The Pine Cottage'. That was in 1915, two years after the colony was started."

We found that in the next few years the colony started to develop at a rapid pace. An extensive building program was carried out and several other cottages for boys at the farm were constructed. In addition, livestock was brought to the farm in greater numbers and agriculture began to reach importance. Instrumental in all of this were the boys who made the colony their home.

Searching for a clue to the beginning of what a reporter for the *Vineland Times Journal* called "a liaison between the boys and happiness . . . " and a position described as "historian, secretary, father confessor, artist and gardener"—we asked Raymond how he started to get interested in painting.

"Well, at first I helped painters who came to the Colony. They used to allow me to help them with the primer coat. Finally I got interested and they used to let me do little jobs by myself. After awhile I was able to handle most any job so The Boss, that's what I call Mr. Merithew, would let me work right along with the painters. I painted Hankins here myself . . ."

We looked around the room and outside each window we could see a neatly painted sill.

"Of course the cottage is mostly brick," he added, "but there was still a lot of trimming to do. So, after I found that I could paint pretty good I started to make little things that could be used around the colony. All kinds of things like signs and little things that helped to make the farm nicer. I used to work down in the cellar of Bleaker Cottage. Boy, I can remember the boys used to complain when I would work late at night. They used to tell The Boss, so when the shack that I use for my Hobbyshop wasn't going to be used any more in 1945 he was glad to let me have it.

"There wasn't much to the shack then", Raymond said. He uncrossed his legs and leaned forward. Two automatic pencils and a ball-point pen stuck out of the breast pocket of his coat. "The first thing I did was to get a work-bench and then things just grew. From the start, I always invited the boys to use the shop and pretty soon I found that it was a nice place to use for letter writing."

The mention of letter writing suggested Raymond's reputation as correspondent for the boys. He has an index file with the names and addresses of the family, relatives or friends of every boy on the farm. Raymond told us that he tries to help each boy write home at least once a week, and in most cases this means that the boys have to dictate the letter to Raymond.

"Sometimes I have to use my judgment and make suggestions because some of the boys can't think of too many things to talk about in a letter. I suggest movies and other things that go on at the colony."

Every letter he writes for the boys is kept on file, and in this way Raymond is able to check on what was said as well as when the last letter was written. His file also notes birthdays in each family and, of course, all holidays. Families and friends of the colony's boys get holiday cards designed by Raymond and which contain verses written by him. A familiar sight at various offices throughout The Training School is a bulletin designed by Raymond, heralding some special event or holiday.

Raymond's letter writing started a good many years ago when he wrote all his correspondence in longhand. A parent heard of Raymond's efforts and gave him a typewriter. The typewriter was old

and did not have a letter "d". However, Raymond put the machine in working condition and started to ease his writing load.

We asked Raymond how he learned to type and he told us that no one ever taught him and that he learned through practice. "I just sat down and started to pick out the letters. Every time I came to a 'd' I just said 'd' to myself and skipped a space. Then I used a pen to letter in all the 'd's' after I was finished," he said.

Last summer the typewriter broke down completely and with a weekly schedule of letter writing to meet, Raymond fell to writing in longhand again. Word of Raymond's plight got around and a letter was written to Mr. W. F. Arnold, Vice President of the Underwood Corporation in New York. The story the letter told of Raymand's efforts and of his need for a new typewriter quickly brought a gift of a new machine from Mr. Arnold and Raymond has since met his weekly schedule with a new typewriter.

Raymond's official job at the colony is that of gardener and he cares for the grounds with as much zeal as he does in following the boys' correspondence. He also plays a vital role in every gathering at the colony, usually acting as host. Raymond is also caretaker of the brown stone chapel at the colony.

Our car arrived in front of Hankins Cottage so we explained to Raymond that we'd have to leave. He shook our hands and said that he'd like to have us come up to the farm later in the Spring when the flowers have started to come out. "I'd like you to see my private garden . . . I call it Johnstone Park, after Professor Johnstone." He said that if he thought of anything more to tell us that he'd write.

Coming back in the car somebody said that he guessed you could call Raymond a "general happiness promoter" at the farm. It was recalled that Mr. Merithew has often called Raymond his "right hand man" and that one of the things that has made him especially valuable at the farm has been that he is "still one of the boys". Because he has been able to gain the confidence of the boys, he has been able to give them the benefit of the years of happiness he has had.